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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: OVERVIEW OF THE 44TH MUNICH CONFERENCE ON SECURITY POLICY

REF: MUNICH 17

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¶1. (U) The 44th annual Munich Conference on Security Policy, under the theme "The World in Disarray - Shifting Powers - Lack of Strategies?" took place February 8-10, 2008 at the Bayerischer Hof hotel in Munich, Germany. Invited guests included more than 200 heads of state, foreign ministers, defense ministers, parliamentary delegations and journalists from around the world, including Serbian President Tadic, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, U.S. Defense Secretary Gates, and Russian Deputy PM Ivanov. Afghanistan and the

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need for greater Allied solidarity in meeting the demands of the ISAF mission was the main topic of discussion (septel), but other highlights included Russian Deputy PM Sergei Ivanov's relatively positive speech about Russia's plans to develop its economy and its desire for greater cooperation with the West. The speech stood in stark contrast to President Putin's hostile remarks at last year's conference, in which he accused the U.S. of trying to start an arms race by deploying a missile defense system in Europe.

Afghanistan gets top billing

¶2. (SBU) In his prepared remarks at the conference, "The Future Development of Afghanistan," Secretary Gates set down a marker that NATO could not "become a two-tiered Alliance of those who are willing to fight and those who are not." Gates, who had come to Munich straight after the February 7-8 informal NATO defense ministerial meeting in Vilnius, said that "such a development, with all its implications for collective security, would effectively destroy the Alliance." Along the same lines, Gates also warned against a division of labor where some allies would opt "only for stability and civilian operations, forcing other Allies to bear a disproportionate share of the fighting and dying." While German interventions continued to demonstrate defensiveness and insecurities regarding their efforts in Afghanistan, Secretary Gates noted that he was not singling out particular countries, but rather underscoring the need of the Alliance as a whole to do more to ensure success.

Opening dinner speech by Tadic

¶3. (SBU) The opening dinner on February 8 included a speech by Serbian President Boris Tadic, who urged attendees to continue pushing for additional dialogue on the Kosovo question while outlining Serbia's EU aspirations. "We cannot accept the dismembering of our country," he said, adding that the optimal solution "is for Serbia -- including Kosovo -- to become a member of the European Union." The speech was described by some attendees as "what's expected at this stage" and "flat."

Opening conference speech by Erdogan

¶4. (SBU) Turkish PM Erdogan opened the conference with a speech entitled "Turkey's Foreign Policy and Security Interests, which focused on Turkey's EU aspirations and rejected the idea of privileged partnership ("after four decades of efforts and promises one cannot change the rules of the game"). Erdogan also reviewed Turkish policy and initiatives in Central Asia, the Middle East, and Iran. Questions focused on the Armenian genocide issue, Cyprus, and concern about Turkish integration into the EU. Regarding the Armenian genocide question, Erdogan was defensive, but noted that establishment of a joint commission of experts to study the Ottoman Empire archives may help resolve the issue. (Septel will report on Erdogan's full visit to Germany.)

The conference panels

¶5. (SBU) Panel Topic 1: "The Atlantic Alliance: Bucharest and Beyond"

(German DefMin Franz Josef Jung, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, French DefMin Herve Morin, Polish FM Radoslav Sikorski, and U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham). Speeches focused on Afghanistan, Russia and missile defense, NATO expansion, and Iraq. German parliamentarians urged more openness from the government to convince the public of why continued efforts in Afghanistan are so important.

NATO SYG noted that he could not "intellectually understand Russian concerns with twenty missiles in Poland" which elicited some applause from the otherwise subdued crowd.

¶6. (SBU) Panel Topic 2: "From Cooperation to Confrontation? The Future of Arms Control" (German FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Senator Joseph Lieberman, IAEA DG Mohamed ElBaradei, and Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch). While Steinmeier and ElBaradei pressed their arms control agenda, Senator Lieberman noted that the unique threats emanating from the Islamic Republic of Iran merited a "uniquely powerful response." Interestingly, no questioners asked for a greater explanation. Unfortunately, ElBaradei barely mentioned Iran during his speech. See SEPTEL.

¶7. (SBU) Panel Topic 3: "A Challenge to European Stability" (Macedonian President Branko Crvenkovski, Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin, Georgian President Saakashvili, and Slovenian FM Dimitrij Rupel). Described by many as the most interesting give-and-take of the day, Crevenkovski went head-to-head with the Greek representative over the Macedonian name issue and Saakashvili battled it out over Abkhazia and Kosovo with several members of the Russian Duma. Following the day's talks, dinner was hosted by Bavarian Minister-President Guenther Beckstein at the Bavarian Residence where conference chair Horst Teltschik was thanked for his efforts over the past ten years on the occasion of his retirement as conference chair.

¶8. (SBU) Panel Topic 4: "Where is Russia going? A New Attempt for an All-European Security Order" (Russian Deputy PM Sergey Ivanov, EU Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, Romanian FM Adrian Cioroianu). As last year, Ivanov again painted a rosy picture of Russia's economic and political future and mostly avoided any polemic issues. He agreed that corruption and the lack of respect for the law are two problems Russia must deal with as it continues its development. Solana, notably, stated his "regret" that Russia has become less constructive on certain issues, particularly on Kosovo. He also urged Russia to abide by its treaty commitments such as CFE.

¶9. (U) Panel Topic 5: "Asia: Building International Stability" (Japanese FM Masahiko Koumura, Indian NSA M.K. Narayanan, Singapore

DefMin Teo Chee Hean) was the final panel of the day and the conference. The panel focused on abstract issues of cooperation in Asia, mainly focusing on institutions such as ASEAN. During the Q&A, MFA State Secretary Boomgarden, whose portfolio includes Asia, described the panel as the most interesting one, and suggested that a panel on Africa should be added to the conference next year.

Ischinger takes over from Teltschik

¶10. (U) Following the final panel, a concluding luncheon was held and Teltschik's successor as chairman, German Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger, 61, was named. It was also announced that the conference would remain in Munich next year, ending rumors that it might be moved to Berlin following Teltschik's retirement. A career diplomat, Ischinger served as ambassador to the United States from 2001 to 2006 and is currently ambassador to the UK. Most recently, he won kudos on both sides of the Atlantic by serving as the EU's representative to the Troika process, which sought a mutually agreeable solution to the Kosovo status question.

Getting CODEL and Bundestag members together

¶11. (U) Mission Germany prioritized efforts this year to bring the Secretary of Defense and members of CoDel Lieberman (Senator Lindsey

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Graham and Representatives Chris Shays, Jane Harman, and Jim Marshall) together with members of the German Parliament (Bundestag). The SecDef hosted an event with the CoDel and a select group of German Parliamentarians. We also organized a number of opportunities to bring other members of the U.S. Delegation (including EUR A/S Dan Fried, VCI A/S Paula DeSutter, and NATO Ambassador Victoria Nuland) together with German Parliamentarians, including a roundtable between the two Assistant Secretaries and roughly ten members of the Bundestag to discuss security policy, arms control and the transatlantic relationship. As opportunities arose, Mission Germany assisted CoDel members throughout the conference in meeting German Parliamentarians of interest.

¶12. (U) For more information on the 44th Conference and past conferences, visit: "<http://www.securityconference.de>" and "<http://munich.usconsulate.gov>."

¶13. (U) This report has been coordinated with Embassy Berlin.

¶14. (U) Previous reporting from Munich is available on our SIPRNET website at www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/munich/.

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